

The Ku Klux Klan in The Greenfield Republican

Greenfield Republican, May 31, 1923

THE KKK'S ARE ACTIVE

Visit Greenfield Thursday Night and Burn Cross at Corner of Jefferson and Washington Streets

HAVE INITIATION AT FRANKFORD WEDNESDAY

South Salem Visited Sunday Evening and Pastor of Methodist Church Presented With Purse

Not to be outdone by surrounding towns, Greenfield received a visit from the Ku Klux Klan Thursday night of last week.

The members of the Klan came into town about midnight and placing a cross at the intersection of Jefferson and Washington streets, set it on fire. It was the regulation cross of that organization, wrapped in sacking which was evidently soaked in oil.

No message was left with the cross so report the officers and others who were about early, evidently being just a visit to inform the public that the Klan has effected an organization in this immediate section.

We understand that the mayor was given information early in the evening that there might be a visit about 9:30 o'clock that evening, but for some reason, if that information was official, the visit was delayed.

It is said there were seven cars containing the members of the Klan though several report they saw more cars than seven, one or two placing the number at 25. Several of the cars are said to have gone out on the Carford pike when they left, while others state that a couple of the cars, at least went north, when they departed.

Met Near Frankfort

There was another meeting of the Klan at Bray's Hill near Frankfort Wednesday evening of last week, one of the features of the meeting being the initiation of a large class into the organization, according to reports. A cross was burned and a parade through the village followed.

Presented Pastor With Purse

On Sunday evening South Salem was visited by about a dozen members of the Ku Klux Klan, who went to the Presbyterian church where a union service was being conducted.

The usually quiet village was very much enlivened that evening by the unusual number of people on their way to the Presbyterian church, walking, driving in cars and coming into town from every road, all going to church that night.

The cause of this sudden and surprising manifestation of piety and worship, was the announcement that Mr. P. I. Wachs of the Methodist church would discuss the question whether the church can endorse the principles of the K. K. K.

The great audience listened attentively while the minister made plain the published principles of the Klan. He stated that the twelfth chapter of Romas is the expression of their motives, principles and methods, making clear that he believes it to be a dignified, patriotic, clean and unselfish movement.

As he was engaged in the closing prayer, a band of hooded persons quietly walked in and stood until he had finished the prayer, and then handed him an envelope, and after

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another brief prayer for the Klan they all walked out and disappeared among the great jam of cars.

Mr. Wachs announced that the envelope contained twenty-five dollars and a note of fellowship and appreciation.

Some people are deeply puzzled how to accept all they heard with what the press of the country is relating of the doings of the Klan.

Greenfield Republican, July 5, 1923

KLAN HOLDS MEETING

K. K. K.'s to the Number of Several Hundred, it is Said, Have Meeting at Chautauqua Park

THURSDAY EVENING AND INITIATE CLASS

Many From Surrounding Towns Said To Have Been Among Those Gathered – Three Crosses Burned

The Ku Klux Klan of this vicinity held a big meeting at Chautauqua Park on Thursday evening last and is said took in a class of some 75 or more members.

Men who are said to belong to the Klan, gathered on the streets before dark, and while the most of them were strangers, it is said that there were quite a number of Hillsboro, Washington C. H. men and others from surrounding towns were among them.

Shortly before 8 o'clock the members of the Klan went out to the Park. The park was closely guarded, members with their hoods on being stationed all around the grounds, it is said.

Early some of the townspeople who knew about the meeting drove out to the park and on around it. As the news spread, there were large numbers who drove out, and the roadway was full of autos clear around to the Spring Grove Dairy, it is said.

How much the spectacular effect lent to the imagination is hard to say, but a number of the onlookers state that they never saw as many autos in the park at a big Chautauqua meeting, as were gathered there that night.

As the autos were admitted to the park, the lights were shut off, and the driver directed where to park. No noise came from the park, and other than an occasional flash light, but little could be distinguished.

It is supposed that the initiation and administering of the oath of allegiance to the organization took place at the auditorium, but no one heard a sound, nor have we heard of anyone who cared to investigate, no matter how brave they may have declared themselves during the daytime.

After the initiation three crosses were burned, one large one and two smaller ones. The larger one is reported as being from 18 to 20 feet high, though the spectacular effect may have added some to this.

After the burning of the crosses, the members of the Klan dispersed leaving in all direction it is said.

Several, who are supposed to belong to the Klan were asked about it the next day, The Republican is told, but disclaimed all knowledge of the affair, further than that they had heard there was a gathering. No notices of any kind were left anywhere.

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Greenfield Republican, August 2, 1923

KLANSMEN HOLD MEETING

Thursday Evening in Field on Farm of Paul Watt at Which Large Class Was Taken In

The Ku Klux Klan in and around Greenfield held a big meeting in a pasture out on the farm of Paul Watt, north of the city last Thursday evening, at which a class was taken in. Reports state all the way from 50 to 75 being in the class.

There was a large attendance of the members of the Klan present and probably as many more lookers on. The road round about was reported filled with autos, carrying people out curious to see what was going on.

Only members of the Klan were allowed in the field. Out some distance from the road two small crosses were placed, which had electric lights thereon, but which revealed little to those outside the fence.

At the close of the meeting a large cross was burned and the crowd dispersed.

Wednesday night a large meeting was slated for Leesburg for both men and women, and a national speaker was announced to give an address.

Friday evening a meeting of the Klansmen from five adjoining counties is announced to be held in a field just outside Frankfort and it is expected several thousand people are expected to be present.

Greenfield Republican, August 16, 1923

INTEREST IN CHAUTAUQUA

Shown by Members of the Ku Klux Klan When Delegation Visits Assembly and Subscribes for 100 Tickets

SAME TO BE GIVEN TO WORTHY PEOPLE

Of Community not Financially Able To Buy Them – Commend Purposes and Work of Chautauqua

The Ku Klux Klan in this vicinity on last Friday evening subscribed for 100 tickets for next year's Chautauqua, and bid the promoters of Chautauqua Godspeed in their work.

The visit of the Klansmen at Chautauqua, which put a little thrill into the proceedings, occurred while a solicitation for pledges of tickets for next year was being made to back a Chautauqua for next year.

Just after the close of the concert while the officers were taking pledges, 22 hooded Knights appeared from out of the darkness at the opening of the pavilion on the west side next to the stage, and gave the audience a thrill by filing in and taking a stand in front and facing the stage.

The leader then stepped forward and handed a sealed envelope to President W. A. Gray, and stepped back in line and all silently waited as Mr. Gray opened and read the letter, which announced that the Klan subscribed for 100 tickets for next year and that they would be given to worthy people who are not financially able to purchase them for themselves. The object of Chautauqua was warmly commended.

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The audience listened quietly as President Gray read the letter, and then broke into hearty applause.

As President Gray thanked the members of the Klan for the interest they were taking in Chautauqua, the members turned and left the pavilion on the opposite side from which they entered, and disappeared in the darkness.

The action is one of quite a number that have taken place in this section of the late showing that the so-called Invisible Empire is living up to their professed faith of trying to make the community and world better. The letter was as follows:

The Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Highland County Klan Realm of Ohio

To the management and patrons of the Greenfield Tri-County Chautauqua Association:

We, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Highland county, as a token of our appreciation of your work for Christianity and real Americanism, wish to subscribe for 100 tickets for the 1924 Chautauqua. These tickets we propose to give to worthy people who do not feel financially able to purchase tickets for themselves.

We, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan have unalterably pledged our lives, property, votes and sacred honor to the support of the tenants of the Christian religion as taught by the Holy Bible, and the work of making America a better country in which to live and to and to preserve for future posterity the sacred constitutional rights and privileges of the fundamental American ideals and principles, as were incorporated in the constitution by our illustrious forefathers, namely free speech, free public schools, free press, eternal separation of church and state, white supremacy, just laws and liberty and protection of our pure womanhood.

Believing that through the community Chautauqua's [sic] throughout America the work of Christianizing and Americanizing America will go forward in the future even more rapidly than it has in the past, we remain,

Highland County Klan
Realm of Ohio
Knights of the Ku Klux Klan
The Invisible Empire

Greenfield Republican, September 27, 1923

"Chautauqua Park Turned Over to Knights of Ku Klux Klan"

"A definite plan has at last materialized whereby Chautauqua Park will be opened to the public. This has been a subject of discussion for several years, but it seemed almost impossible to find a plan that would work out successfully.

"In keeping with the principles of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan the local organization desires to tender a service to the community and have leased the grounds for a stated period under the following conditions:

"First, To assume the debt of approximately \$5000 which has been hanging over the heads of the board for several years.

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“Second, To repair the buildings now located on the grounds, erect new buildings, put out shrubbery and trees, build walks and driveways and make this the beauty spot of Greenfield.

“Third, To open the grounds as a public park for the use of all the citizens of Greenfield and surrounding community. A caretaker will look after the grounds and see that they are kept clean.

“Fourth, They guarantee the city clean amusements. They assure the board, in fact, it is embodied in the lease that no Sunday baseball, dancing pavilion or Sunday motion pictures will be allowed on the grounds. The Klan believes in the tenets of the Christian religion and Sunday observance. One hundred percent American and clean living is their motto.

“Fifth, They grant the Chautauqua board all privileges for a period of two weeks to thirty days, as may be required to hold their camping and annual session.

“Sixth, It is to be the home of the local Klan and they reserve the right to close the gates at such times as required for their private meetings.

“The local organization has a large membership of both men and women, and is rapidly increasing in numbers. They have reached a point where it is imperative that they secure a meeting place. Chautauqua grounds and auditorium seem to meet their every requirement, and they feel by taking this step they would be serving a double purpose, namely, release Chautauqua of its indebtedness and open it to the public, and secure a home for themselves.

“The Klan believes in the great Chautauqua movement and will do everything possible to promote its welfare. A big Chautauqua had already been assured for next year, but with this organization back of it, it should be the largest and best gathering ever had in Greenfield.

THE REPUBLICAN’S STATEMENT

The above is an unsigned statement handed to The Republican by a representative of the Ku Klux Klan of this community. Though not signed the original copy is on file in our vault and knowing who the writer was and also knowing that he was in a position to know what the Klan is undertaking, The Republican simply follows its established policy not to antagonize or invite any form of agitation in our community, but follow its motto of “peace,” we give the statement in full as it came to us, as it is a matter the public has a right to know all about.

The Republican hopes that the Klansmen will go ahead as promised and give the people of the community a park such as they ought to have, and such as can be made of Chautauqua Park.

But The Republican desires the public to know, as many of our citizens do know, that while the proposition of the Klan was before the board, there was also in the hands of the Chautauqua board of directors a proposition submitted to it by The Republican, backed by representative business men of the city. This proposition was entirely separate and apart from that submitted by the K.K.K.’s having no connection with their proposition whatever.

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The proposition of The Republican and business men of the city simply asked that the park be turned over to the city, or be placed under a board of governors representing the business men, and opened to the public.

A letter containing this proposition was sent to each member of Chautauqua board, and we have the signed acknowledgement from about two-thirds of the members of the board, and also had the verbal statements from two or three other members that they were in favor of the proposition of opening the park, either by the city or business men, the details of the proposition to be worked out.

Just why, when the proposition of the Klan was up at a special meeting of the board, called by the president, the business men were not notified and given an opportunity to present the details of their proposition, The Republican does not know. Neither do any of the business men interested.

The Republican is informed by a director who was present, that the question was asked if there was any other proposition for the opening of the Park other than that made by the Klan, and that the president replied that no other propositions had been made.

The Republican was urged by many business men to take the part it did and its only aim was in behalf of the Greenfield business interests, of its citizens and of all classes, in fact of the entire community to get the park open for the public use – where good, healthy amusements could be had and the grounds be used for picnic purposes by the public when desired.

While The Republican was informed there was a special meeting of the board, we had no idea that the business presented to it was the disposal of the park, until the above communication was placed in our hands a day or two later.

Incidentally, we are informed that the whole matter so far as this lease is concerned, it is illegal. That the board has exceeded its powers, and cannot make a lease for a longer period than three years.

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COPY OF LEASE FOR CHAUTAUQUA PARK TO THE KU KLUX KLAN

Following is a copy of the lease given by the board of directors of Chautauqua Park, to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. It will be noticed that the lease is not signed by any member of the local organization, but by an officer higher up. We understand this is because the local organization is not fully formed, having as yet not received a charter. The copy of the lease follows:

Copy of Lease

This agreement made and entered into this 19th. Day of September 1923, by and between the Greenfield Tri-County Chautauqua Association by its President, Walter A. Gray and its Secretary J. M. Watt, party of the first part and the local organization of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan by its county representative, party of the second part. Witnesseth:

That the first party in consideration of the covenants and agreements herein on the part of the second party to be performed, has this day leased unto the said second party the grounds hereinafter described, together with all the buildings thereon, for a period of twenty-five (25) years with privilege of renewal hereby reserving the right and privilege of

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one month, if needed, in each year so leased, for Chautauqua and camping purposes, at such time as the Chautauqua Board of Directors may determine from year to year and with the express understanding that said park and grounds shall not be sublet as a whole; that No Dance Pavilion or dancing; no Sunday Base Ball; no Sunday Motion Pictures nor any immoral practices shall be allowed or permitted on said grounds or in said buildings, and with the further agreement and understanding that said grounds are to be open to the public at all times for Public Park purposes, save and except such times as required for private meetings of the Klan

The local order of The Knights of The Ku Klux Klan by its duly authorized representatives and its successors and assigns, and in consideration of the foregoing Contract of Leasehold, hereby covenants and agrees on its part as follows, to-wit:

First: It assumes and agrees to pay all the present indebtedness of said Greenfield Tri-County Chautauqua Association.

Second: To pay all taxes and assessments levied on or against said park and the buildings thereon.

Third: The [sic] assume and pay all expenses of repairs, upkeep and improvements on said park and grounds and to make such improvements as are deemed proper to them and meet the approval of the Chautauqua Board of Directors in order to make said grounds a Public Park and to bear all expense of same; and further to control said park at all times and properly care for same.

Fourth: Said second party covenants and agrees to make necessary repairs to buildings, fences and grounds, and to maintain the same in good repair at all times during the continuance of this Leasehold and during the time to which the same may be extended; and at the termination of this lease whether by time, agreement or dissolution all buildings and improvements thereon revert with the grounds to The Greenfield Tri-County Chautauqua Association its successors or assigns.

Fifth: No buildings, permanent or temporary, to be located or erected on the grounds without first conferring with and securing the consent of the Board of Directors of The Greenfield Tri-County Chautauqua Association, and all such temporary or permanent improvements to be the property of the Chautauqua Association at the termination of this Leasehold

The property herein leased as described as follows, to-wit:

“A tract of land situate in Madison Township, Highland County, Ohio, containing about thirty acres and located and being immediately North of the North corporation line of the Incorporated Village of Greenfield, Ohio, known as the “Fair Grounds” Save and excepting therefrom the Welshimer Home Residence and premises; the S. D. Crothers Residence and premises, and the Lots heretofore sold to Minnie Waddell and A. L. Slavens by the grantor herein.

(This description taken from the Agreement for a Deed to said premises by Lucy Welshimer to The Tri-County Chautauqua Association, Deed Book No.106, Page 184, of the Record of Deeds of Highland County, Ohio)

In witness whereof, the said parties have hereunto set their hands on the day and year first above written.

Signed and acknowledged in our presence:

The Ku Klux Klan in The Greenfield Republican

A. A. J. ROW

CHAS ROGERS

DEAN MONTOYA

THE GREENFIELD TRI-COUNTY CHAUTAUQUA ASSOCIATION, Greenfield,
Ohio

By WALTER A. Gray, President

And J. M. Watt, Secretary

P. P. BRUSH, Representative

Local Organization of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

The State of Ohio, Highland County, ss.

Be it remembered, That on the 19th day of September, in the year A. D. 1923, before me, the subscriber, a Notary Public in and for said County, personally came, Walter A. Gray, President, and J. M. Watt, Secretary of the Greenfield Tri-County Chautauqua Association, and P. P. Brush the duly authorized representative of the Local organization of the Ku Klux Klan, the parties named in the forgoing Lease, and acknowledged this signing thereof to be the Voluntary act and deed of said corporation, for the uses and purposes therein mentioned.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my Notarial seal on the day and year aforesaid.

CHAS. F. ROGERS, (seal)

Notary Public, Highland County, O.

(Received Sept. 24, 1923 at 2:35 p.m.)

(Recorded Sept. 25, 1923, \$1.00 pd.)

Recorded in Lease Book No. 4, page 128.

Records of Highland County, Ohio.

Greenfield Republican, October 18, 1923

ASK RENTAL FROM BOYS

New Lessees of Chautauqua Park Ask Boys 5 Per Cent of Gate Receipts For Use of Park

All through the existence of athletics in the high school of Greenfield, the boys have had the use of the Chautauqua Park free, for their football games and other activities.

When the lease was made recently to the Ku Klux Klan, it was stated in the lease that one of the objects was to give Greenfield and community clean amusements.

This is what the boys have been doing and the Chautauqua directors in order to promote the athletic activities of the school never charged the boys any rental for the park.

The Republican understands that a few days ago the new lessees of the park served notice upon the boys that hereafter five percent of the gate receipts would have to be paid to the Klan for the use of the park. As the boys are not in the activities for money but for the promotion of school activities and as a rule barely receive more than the amount of their expenses, this added expense assumes the form of a burden.

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Greenfield Republican, November 8, 1923

THE KLAN GATHERING

In Greenfield Last Saturday Members of That Organization Here For Meeting at Park

The gathering of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan at Chautauqua Park, Saturday last, which had been so widely advertised for several weeks, brought out a bunch of Klansmen from the surrounding counties and from Highland county, which has been variously estimated at from 2000 to 3000. The estimates of those who would be here ranged up to as high as 20,000.

During the afternoon and evening there were addresses and initiation [sic] at the park. In the evening there was a parade, which had been widely advertised.

Early in the evening Mayor Daniels was asked if the streets in the business districts could be cleared of autos, and refused to give permission. This has been given as one reason for the smallness of the parade.

There were between 600 and 700 in the parade, which was headed by the Greene County Ku Klux Klan band. The parade was received very quietly by the crowd along the streets.

After the parade there were addresses and fireworks at the park.

Greenfield Republican, September 27, 1923

Greenfield Republican, November 29, 1923

OUR SCHOOLS

Mr. McClain's Appeal

"We must not suffer the stranger, the destroyer, the hater of happy humanity, to divide our people. In unity is American strength – and freedom." (Henry Ford, in his late book, "My Life and Work.")

I am very much interested in Mr. Harris's appeal (last week's Republican) for leadership and financial aid in behalf of an athletic field. It is timely, if there is to be no break in a long cherished hope.

Perhaps a word of explanation from me will not be out of order: As far back as two years ago Mr. Harris and I discussed this subject. Through his activities a tract of land was acquired by the Board of Education at a point about two blocks northwest of the schools. But to me that seemed too disconnected – too far – too much out of the way. And the land seemed low and unpromising for such a purpose. So I suggested that, in due time, it might come to a point where it would give me a great pleasure to assist in so worthy a project. To do so would nicely fit in with my other moves in behalf of our young folks.

Accordingly I began to acquire property immediately adjacent to the schools, and this has proceeded to that extent where the entire block immediately to the north has been

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purchased as well as the next block on the north, the latter facing southward on North Street.

All of this land is now available for an athletic field, or so much as may seem desirable, the only condition that it shall be used for public school and civic purposes and that the improvements shall be commensurate with the improvements I have been making in the way of schools.

It seems to me that the moment is opportune. It is timely that something be done now. And I have faith that the request of Mr. Harris's will not be passed over. This should be done while the other school improvements are in hand, so there will come no break in the continuity, nor in the enthusiasm and interest on the part of those who are volunteering to act freely in behalf of the present and future. I have an abiding hope that the Ku Klux Klan will assume this (if it is not otherwise soon done), as part of its "100 percent American" creed, provided, as I have been told, and as I really believe, this organization assumed the responsibility of opposing the program I advanced in the recent School Board election. Even though the Klan felt that it could not work with me, in the request I made of the electorate in that election, I stand ready to cooperate and work with the Klan, as occasion, or opportunity may offer.

Just let me take advantage of this opportunity to say something about Mr. Harris's cooperation in all of these school improvements: For ten years he has faithfully worked with me. He has had my confidence in advance of any word to the public, from time to time, and I have had his in planning, which has been simply invaluable. I do not need to praise Mr. Harris, as to his school work, for it has been like an open book and speaks for itself in a way not misunderstood. It has been, and is, par excellence, which is said with due respect to the board and all others who have nobly devoted themselves to the slogan, "Better Schools for Greater Greenfield."

Sincerely trusting that this program which Mr. Harris laid out two years ago can now be made to materialize, with the best assistance of all, in which I stand included.

Respectfully,

E. L. McClain